



# הֶרְחֵב פִּיךָ וַאֲמַלְאֶהוּ

*Harchev Peacha VaAmal'ahu*

Open Your Mouth Wide, and I (God) Will Fill It

(PSALM 81)

**Prayers and Rituals**  
**for those who need to eat on Yom Kippur**

Compiled by A Mitzvah to Eat  
and Chronic Congregation



Welcome to our prayer guide for those who need to eat on Yom Kippur. Perhaps you will connect to all of the prayers/rituals, or perhaps just one or two selections will speak to you. Please use this guide in a way that is meaningful for you. We are here to support you.

Please find our work and communities here:



### **A MITZVAH TO EAT**

**Facebook** A Mitzvah to Eat

**Instagram** @a\_mitzvah\_to\_eat

**Website** <http://www.amitzvahtoet.org>

A Mitzvah to Eat supports those who need to connect to fast days, mitzvot, or holidays differently to protect their health, save their lives, or reduce their suffering. We empower individuals and communities with learning, prayers, and resources to bring holiness to acts of self-preservation.



### **CHRONIC CONGREGATION**

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Chronic Congregation provides community for Jews with chronic illness and/or disability; raises awareness of and reframes how Judaism has traditionally discussed disability and illness; offers new prayers and rituals that reflect the lived experience of disabled and chronically ill Jews.

Graphic design by Rachel Jackson | [www.binahdesign.com](http://www.binahdesign.com)

# A Prayer for Eating on Yom Kippur

*Created by A Mitzvah to Eat*



Dear God,

As I prepare to eat on Yom Kippur, please help me find meaning.

As I nourish my body, heart, mind, and soul, may comfort envelop me.

May I find teshuvah by returning to my inner light.

By returning to my true self.

May I find a community who will hold me where I am.

For who I am.

May the words of my heart reach Your loving and compassionate presence.

May I find peace and holiness through eating, through connecting, through You.

# An Intention for Eating on Yom Kippur

*By Rabba Melissa Scholten-Gutierrez*

*Yehi Ratzon milfanecha....*

May it be your will, God of compassion and grace, that I can remember that every bite I eat today is my Mitzvah. God of mercy, help me remember that this food fuels my soul so that I may serve you in health for another year.

Just as you are slow to anger, abundant in kindness and truth - let me be so with myself in the moments when I feel guilt or shame, knowing that this is my mitzvah. Allow me to be amongst those with whom you preserve kindness for a thousand generations.

May it be your will that I eat knowing it is not a sin, and that although you are the forgiver of iniquity, willful sin, and errors - my eating will not be amongst those moments which are cleansed by repentance today. Allow me the self awareness to not slip into that space.

I am but your servant, and need to eat so that I may dwell in your house all my days.

# mindful eating on Yom Kippur when fullness is holy

*Created by Rabbi Emily Aronson and Rachel Joy Bell*

## **An introduction by Rachel Joy Bell:**

For many people, Yom Kippur is a day of fasting. However, for others, fasting is neither safe nor healthy. It is important for our physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing that we engage in holy practices that are right for us. If, for any reason, you find yourself needing to eat today, here are some blessings for food (reminders that food is holy, too), a guided meditation, and a few personal accounts to make you feel less alone in these already isolating times. Be kind to yourself. Take deep breaths. Nourish yourself in a way that works for you. Today is a day of fullness – full hearts, full minds, and, for some, full bodies. Cherish the fullness.

## **blessing for preserving life:**

*“Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al pikuakh nefesh.”*

*Blessed are you, adonai, ruler of the universe, who makes us holy through your commandments and commands us to preserve life*

## **choleh – someone who is sick**

Talmud Yoma 83a:2

It was taught in the mishna: If a person is ill and requires food due to potential danger, one feeds him according to the advice of medical experts. Rabbi Yannai said: If an ill person says he needs to eat, and a doctor says he does not need to eat, one listens to the ill person. What is the reason for this halakha? It is because the verse states: “The heart knows the bitterness of its soul” (Proverbs 14:10), meaning an ill person knows the intensity of his pain and weakness, and doctors cannot say otherwise. The Gemara asks: It is obvious that a person knows himself better than anyone else does. Why does this need to be stated explicitly? The Gemara answers: It is lest you say that the doctor is more certain because he has had more experience with this condition. Therefore, the verse teaches us that even so, it is the ill person who knows his own suffering better than anyone else.

**“For Those Who Must Eat on Yom Kippur” (from Mishkan Hanefesh)**

*Rabbis Janet and Sheldon Marder*

*Rofei chol basar*—Healer of all living creatures:

I thank You for the breath that is in me  
for the community of Israel that lives  
for the possibilities of today and tomorrow.

May my eating be as a fast;  
May it be dedicated to You, to t’shuvah--  
To the renewal and restoration of my relationship  
to You, to others, and to myself.

## blessings for food:

**bread**

“Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha’olam hamotzi lehem min ha’aretz.”

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

**fruit that grows on trees**

“Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha’olam borei p’ri ha’etz.”

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

**vegetables or fruits that grow from the ground**

“Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha’olam borei p’ri ha’adamah.”

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the ground.

**grains**

“Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha’olam borei minei mezonot.”

Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates varieties of nourishment.

# When Fasting Is Not Teshuvah: Yom Kippur for those who need to eat

*By Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers and Rabbi Deborah Blausten*  
Minor edits to the original ritual made with permission by A Mitzvah to Eat

For many in the Jewish community, fasting is an important and difficult spiritual exercise, reminding them of their attachment to the physical, and helping them focus on teshuvah and spiritual growth for 25 hours.

For others, however, fasting presents a different kind of challenge. For individuals for whom fasting is harmful, eating on Yom Kippur is a holy act. Rather than finding "purity" or "spiritual growth" through denying themselves food, the act of eating itself is an act of teshuvah.

This was not something I had considered until I was approached this year by a friend seeking a liturgy that helps her acknowledge the holiness of the act of eating on Yom Kippur, having found little that helped online or in our traditional liturgy. This was developed together with her, in the hope it might also help others. As she said to me, she would like to create something that would "bring a kavannah (intention) to the act of eating on Yom Kippur, framing it in a positive, constructive way but also recognizing the religious and personal challenges of the day."

The following ritual is based on various symbolic Jewish ideas, but the starting point is a plate of food set aside as an eruv tavshilin. This plate has a holy purpose in being set aside. The plate/box of food we will create for this ritual will also have a holy purpose, but one which will only be fulfilled if the food is eaten.

## **Resources:**

A plate or lunch box (perhaps one painted specially for this purpose, i.e., a seder plate)

A bottle of water

Dates

Bread

Hummus

Prayers

The plate should be prepared prior to the fast, carefully setting aside that which will nurture your soul and body during the Day of Atonement.



In dedicating the plate the following blessings are recited:

Every person is a question which God addresses to humanity; and every person, from their place, with their own special talents and possibilities, must answer for their own sake

(Adapted from Leo Baeck)

Avinu Malkeinu, on this day of atonement, this day of at-one-ment, I answer with all that I am.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂנוּ בְּצַלְמוֹ וּבְרִצּוֹנָה

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh ha'olam sh'asani betzalmo vekirtzonah.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, Ruler of Time and Space,  
Who has made me in His image and according to Her will.\*

#### **Traditional blessing for acts done for the preservation of life:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל פְּקוּדֵי נֶפֶשׁ

*Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheynu Melekh haolam,  
asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al pikuakh nefesh.*

Blessed are you Eternal, Sovereign of the universe, Who makes us holy through Your commandments, and Who commands us to preserve life.

Blessed are You Eternal, who creates each of us whole, and none of us perfect.

Before eating or drinking an item we offer a small thought, or kavanah כוונה • (intention), and the traditional blessing over that item.

#### **Tamar • תמר (Date):**

The Date palm is a symbol of righteousness (Psalm 92).

I acknowledge that the right path is not always the easiest one and seek that which will nourish me in body and soul, giving me the strength to live righteously in Your world.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh ha'olam boray peri ha'eytz*

Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe,  
who creates the fruit of the trees

### **Hummus • חומוס:**

The product of the earth calls me to embrace food and hunger as natural, and asks me to allow myself to 'eat and be satisfied' (Deuteronomy 8:12).

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה  
*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh ha'olam boray peri ha'adamah*  
Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe,  
who creates the fruit of the earth

### **Mayim • מים (water):**

God, the source of life, provides me with *mayim chayyim* • מים חיים living water.

May it be a source of hope, refreshing my body, comforting my soul.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדִבְרוֹ  
*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh ha'olam shehakol ni'hiyeh bidvaro*  
Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, by whose word all things exist

### **Lechem • לחם (bread):**

While bread at tashlich • תשליך is thrown away as our sins, for me to not eat it would be as a sin. Challah • חלה is an offering to God, and so today my humble offering is to eat this bread in my attempt to return to you, God.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ  
*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheynu Melekh ha'olam hamotzi lekhem min ha'aretz*  
Blessed are You, our Living God, Sovereign of the universe, who brings forth food out of  
the earth

Combining the bread and the hummus: These bricks and mortar provide my New Year with strong foundations, helping me work towards always building a healthier, happier me, as all Jews do on this day, and acknowledging that for me, spiritual emptiness lies in denying my body the nourishment it needs.

**When things are difficult during the day, and/or as a closing blessing:**

In my Maker's hand I lay my soul  
Both when I sleep  
And when I wake,  
And with my soul my body too,  
My God is close, I shall not fear.


בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי  
בְּעֵת אִישָׁן וְאֶעֱרָה  
וְעִם רוּחִי גְוִיָּתִי  
אֲדֹנָי לִי וְלֹא אֵירָא

*Beyado afkid rukhi  
Be'et ishan ve'a'irah  
Ve'im rukhi geviyati,  
Adonay li velo ira*

\*This brakhah originally printed in Lilith Vol. 31: no 4, p. 37, written by Rabbi Elliot Kukla

# Meditation before Yom Kippur for One who Cannot Fast

*By Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW  
From Ritualwell, <https://ritualwell.org/>*



Ribbono shel Olam/Master of the Universe;  
Creator of All, Source of All Life,  
Who Knows What is Deep in Human Hearts,  
Who Nurtures Every Living Being:

As You know, dear God,  
Yom Kippur is fast approaching, and because of my condition,

I am not able to keep the traditional fast –  
I cannot abstain totally from eating.

On this Day of Atonement, this Sabbath of Sabbaths,  
this year and every year,

it is so central to join the people of Israel  
in denying ourselves food and drink for one day  
so that we focus on correcting our misdeeds,

on knowing our mortality;  
on reaching for a life of Torah, mitzvot, and lovingkindness;  
on You.

You know, dear God, that it is not my intent

to be apart from our people and our tradition.  
My current state of health makes it unsuitable for me to fast

So, dear God, I turn to You now in sincerity and openness:

Help me in the coming year to do my best in guarding my health.

Help us, Your children, learn how to protect our bodies from harm.  
Help us support others in caring for their tzelem Elokim, their Image of God.  
Teach us to help one another grow and thrive in Body, Mind, and Spirit.

Guide caring family and health care professionals in their partnering with you  
to bring healing if not cure, support and strength if not an end to symptoms.

And if there is an opportunity for me to help others who suffer  
by doing something they need or by being attentive company –  
Grant me the ability to do this mitzvah with love and devotion.

Rofeh khol basar/Healer of all living creatures:  
I thank You for the breath that is in me

for the community of Israel that lives  
for the possibilities of today and tomorrow.

May my eating be as a fast;  
May it be dedicated to You, to T'shuvah –

to the Renewal and Restoration of my Relationship  
to You, to Others, and to Myself.

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Center for Jewish Healing

# A prayer to be recited before eating or drinking on Yom Kippur

*attributed to an ancient machzor*

הנני מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצוות אכילה ושתייה ביום-הכיפורים, כמו שכתבת בתורתך "ושמרתם את חוקותי ואת משפטי אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם, אני ה'" ובזכות קיום מצווה זו, תחתום אותי, ואת כל חולי עמך ישראל לרפואה שלימה, כן יהי רצון, אמן.

Here I am, ready and able to perform the mitzvah of eating and drinking on Yom Kippur, as you wrote in your Torah: "You shall keep My laws and My rules, by the pursuit of which a person shall live: I am God". And on the merit of fulfilling this mitzvah, may you seal me and all the ill in your nation Israel to be completely healed. May it be Your will, Amen.